Police. 3 persons are reported to have been arrested in connection with this case.

(e) In the wake of this incident, there has been a large scale communal violence in the State, particularly in district Kandhamal in which, *inter alia*, there have been targeted attacks against the members of Christian community and their places of worship, etc. According to available information, provided by the State Government, 39 persons have been killed and at least 126 persons injured in this violence, 1463 houses and 97 religious buildings, including churches have been burnt/damaged. Around 24000 persons are reported to have left their homes and villages in the wake of violence, and accommodated in relief camps set up by the State Government. Around 14000 persons are still reported to be living in relief camps. The State Government has informed that 789 cases have been registered in connection with the violence and 1158 persons have been arrested.

(f) The Ministry of Home Affairs has remained in continuous and close touch with the Government of Orissa ever since incidents of communal violence were reported in the State. Seven advisories/ communications were sent to the State Government between 25.08.2008 and 10.10.2008 at various levels, including the Union Home Secretary and the Union Home Minister, in which the State Government was *inter alia*, asked/directed to take stringent action against the persons indulging in communal violence, including identifying and apprehending elements inciting and stoking communal violence and hatred; ensure arrangements to provide security to members of the minority community and their places of worships, etc.; undertake comprehensive measures for relief and rehabilitation of the victims and other affected persons, including measures for reconstruction/ repair of the residential and other structures that were burnt/ damaged during the violence; and, take effective steps to create an environment in which people who had to leave their homes could return at the earliest.

The State Police and Central Forces have been deployed in affected and vulnerable areas to prevent further violence and create on environment of peace and security. The Ministry of Home Affairs has also provided 53 Companies of Central Para-Military Forces to the State Government, in additional to 24 Companies already deployed in the State in connection with the naxalite problem. One helicopter was also provided to the State Government to enable the movement of officials and force personnel.

The Union Home Minister visited the State of Orissa on 03.09.2008 and reviewed the law and order situation there. He also visited a relief camp in G. Udayagiri. The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Shri Shriprakash Jaiswal earlier visited the State of Orissa on 27.08.2008.

Concern of Amnesty International over Human Rights Scenario

*78. SHRI N.K. SINGH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that once again Amnesty International has expressed its concern on suppression of human rights in India, citing instances in Nandigram, missing persons in J & K, rehabilitation of adivasis in Dantewada in Chhattisgarh and nonabolition of capital punishment;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken Government is contemplating to address these issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) Amnesty International is an International NGO based in London and is one among the many NGOs based out side India which bring out reports on alleged human rights violations, from time to time, all over the world, including India. The methods used by such organizations to gather information have often been questioned, particularly as they are not free from bias. It is not the policy of the Government to react to such reports by International NGOs on internal matters of India.

However, Government of India is committed to take all necessary measures to protect the human rights of all its citizens. The Indian Constitution contains extensive safeguards for the protection of human rights. In addition, the National Human Rights Commission has also been set up under the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to provide an effective mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The specific issues referred to in part (a) cover a broad range of subjects ranging from Law & Order, which is a State subject, to matters of basic policy. Such issues are appropriately addressed by the relevant authorities.

Increase in monthly allowances to Gallantry Awardees

†*79.SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the last three years, requests have been received by Government from various organizations with regard to increasing monthly allowances to gallantry award winners and sanctioning class-wise pension and dearness allowance to Param Vir Chakra, Ashoka Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra, Kirti Chakra, Vir Chakra and Shaurya Chakra award winners in accordance with pension and dearness allowance being given to freedom fighters;

(b) if so, the details thereof, and

(c) the action taken/to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) Requests from 'War Decorated India' an organization of gallantry award winners, and some other individuals/Organizations were received during the last three years for increasing monthly allowances to gallantry award winners. They have also requested for treating them at par with freedom fighters and grant of pension and dearness allowance as admissible to freedom fighters.

Government has issued orders in May 2008 increasing the rates of allowances to various Pre Independence and Post Independence Gallantry award winners. The revised rates are given in the Statement (*See* below).

After issue of the revision of rates in May 2008, 'War Decorated India' and some other individuals have again requested for further revision of the rates of monetary allowances and to bring it at par with those granted to freedom fighters. As the rates of their allowances have already been revised substantially, further revision of allowances is not considered appropriate at this stage.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi